

*Amherst Recycling & Refuse Management Committee*

## **Meeting Minutes**

November 13, 2014, 4:00 PM, DPW Conference Room

Present: Laurel Dickey, Cristina Cox Fernandes, Brenda Kennedy-Davies, Arnie Alper, Craig Goff, Sue Morrello, Andy Steinberg (SB liaison), Arlene Miller (DEP), Susan Waite (DPW).

Minutes from 7/10, 9/4, 9/18 & 10/8 were approved with minor corrections.

### **Downtown Recycling pilot update**

Susan relayed Alan Snow's October report re: how the new recycling bins downtown are faring. They are getting a lot of trash in them. Brenda says she has been watching them and finds that the majority of the material in the bins is recyclable and that the ones with the special (temporary) signs have less trash in them. She will take an inventory to see which of the bins no longer have the special signs and Susan will see that replacement signs are made. The signs were intended to be temporary. How long should they be kept up? Susan pointed out that if they are kept up after Jan 1, someone will have to monitor them after her employment end date.

Brenda believes that contamination occurs because of 1) lack of signs (feels permanent signs on bins are not sufficient because trash bins are so similar); 2) many trash cans do not have recycling bins next to them; 3) the "pilot" nature of the program does not encourage the Town to find workable solutions.

Craig motioned to make the pilot a permanent program and provide a recycling bin next to each trash barrel.  
Discussion:

- Brenda feels strongly that the green MassCor cage-type bins will work better because they visually announce that they are different from trash, and they are far less expensive than the Victor Stanley bins we currently have in place.
- Some neighboring communities use the MassCor bins, but they need frequent replacement (durability issues), some consider them unattractive (visible contents and sidewalk seepage attracts bees). Arlene says Longmeadow has some MassCor containers they may be able to transfer to us as employees there disliked them.
- Susan explained that the Victor Stanley recycling bins now used match the original streetscape design and are extremely durable (last 10-20 years).
- The BID is supportive of the program, and may assist with purchase of additional bins via their Beautification Committee.
- Andy suggested that we recommend that Guilford add purchase of bins into next year's capital planning cycle. He will give an update to the Select Board.

The motion passed (4 in favor, 2 opposed).

The Downtown Recycling working group (Brenda, Arnie, Susan) had planned to work with the Parks Department to consolidate the number of downtown trash bins in an effort to streamline the process (reduce collection time) and reduce the number of recycling bins necessary to purchase. This still needs to happen.

Brenda moved that we request that MassCor recycling bins be used downtown in place of the bins now used because they are less expensive, and provide better visual identification for the public. The motion did not pass (2 in favor, 4 opposed).

*Continued*

## **Continued discussion about transfer station options & strategies**

### *Municipal Waste Collection*

Arnie presented the results of his investigation into trash removal at Town sites. There are different pricing structures and four different haulers are employed. He will confirm pick-up frequency for trash and recycling at all sites and that the costs stated include or exclude recycling charges.

Why don't the departments contracting with haulers instead use the Transfer Station instead (likely transportation-related issues)?

Arlene says it is common for municipalities to hire a hauler to take care of waste in municipal buildings, but it is unusual for there to be more than one hauler involved.

Most of these departments use toters for trash. Amherst does not have a truck that can empty toters. Our truck can only handle dumpsters unless we purchase a special truck attachment (assuming our truck can accommodate one).

It would behoove the Town to explore if a single hauler would charge better rates to service all departments currently contracting on their own.

### *Transfer station (TS) operating expenses*

Arlene feels we have enough data to make some conclusions. If we strip away the landfill monitoring expenses and school collection expenses, income from the TS cannot support its employee costs. She feels it is underutilized and overstaffed, the sticker fee (as well as other fees) is too high, the hours could be more public-focused (open later in day) and that it is Amherst's "best kept secret" (people don't know about it).

Andy explained that he has lived in Amherst for many years and did not until recently know that he could bring his own trash to the TS and save the cost of hiring a hauler. Susan said this was supported by the Town's 2012 Waste Survey, when a high number of non-sticker owners said they did not know that they could get access to the Transfer Station.

Promotion ideas for TS sticker sales: Hold weekend open house and sell blue bags all over town instead of just at TS (exposure).

Susan explained that Guilford would like, within the next two weeks, a recommendation about the TS from the Committee with a list of recommended actions for financial solvency if the Committee's recommendation is to keep it open.

The TS working group and Arlene will meet to draft a list a Committee response and will present it to the full Committee for discussion and approval during our December 4 Committee meeting. Susan will send a Doodle and to schedule the working group meeting.

### **New Business**

Susan will become an hourly employee as of 12/1/2014 and anticipates leaving the Town's employ entirely in early 2015.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.